

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 14369

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SUBJ: POSSIBLE UNOFFICIAL ART EXHIBIT IN TBILISI

REF.: A. MOSCOW 13169

B. MOSCOW 13519

C. LENINGRAD 1423

1. SOVIET UNOFFICIAL ARTISTS ARE PLANNING ANOTHER PUBLIC EXHIBIT, THIS ONE IN TBILISI. A GROUP OF APPROXIMATELY TEN LEADING UNOFFICIAL ARTISTS EACH FROM MOSCOW, LENINGRAD AND THE BALTIC REPUBLICS PLAN TO GO TO GEORGIA AROUND OCTOBER 10 FOR A PERIOD OF TWO OR THREE WEEKS. OSTENSIBLY THEY ARE GOING SEPARATELY, AND THE ANNOUNCED PURPOSE IS TO REST AFTER THE RIGORS OF THE LENINGRAD AND MOSCOW ART SHOWS (SEE REFTELS). THEIR GEORGIAN COUNTERPARTS ARE IN THE MEANTIME TRYING TO SECURE THE AGREEMENT OF THE TBILISI CULTURAL AUTHORITIES TO PERMIT AN EXHIBITION. IF THE LATTER APPROVE, THE VISITING FIREMEN WILL THEN SEND FOR THEIR PAINTINGS (ABOUT FIVE CANVASES FROM EACH ARTIST) AND WILL JOINTLY SHOW THEIR WORK WITH THAT OF THE GEORGIANS. IF ALL GOES WELL -- AND THE PROGNOSIS IN MOSCOW IS FAVORABLE -- THE OPENING WILL BE ON OCTOBER 18 AND THE EXHIBIT WILL RUN FOR A WEEK OR TEN DAYS. IN THE WORST CASE, SAY THE ARTISTS, THERE WILL HAVE BEEN TWO

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WEEKS OF REST "IN SUNNY GEORGIA."

2. ACCORDING TO THE MUSCOVITE ARTISTS WHO HOPE TO PARTICIPATE, THIS WILL MARK THE FIRST TIME THAT AN INTER-CITY UNOFFICIAL EXHIBIT WILL TAKE PLACE, AND THE FIRST MAJOR UNOFFICIAL EXHIBIT IN GEORGIA. THE MOSCOW AND LENINGRAD CONTINGENTS WILL PARTICIPATE BECAUSE THOSE TWO CITIES CONTAIN BY FAR THE LARGEST PERCENTAGE OF IMPORTANT UNOFFICIAL ARTISTS. THE BALTIC REPUBLIC CONTINGENT (ALL ARE , IN FACT, ESTONIAN) HAS BEEN INCLUDED BECAUSE ESTONIA IS SUBJECT TO WESTERN INFLUENCE THANKS TO, AMONG OTHER THINGS, FINNISH TV AND RADIO. ART IN ESTONIA IS OF RELATIVELY HIGH QUALITY. OUR SOURCES NOTE THAT TBILISI CONTAINS, WITH YEREVAN, THE ONLY OTHER MAJOR CONCENTRATION OF UNOFFICIAL ARTISTS IN THE USSR. OUR SOURCES SAY THAT EITHER CITY WOULD HAVE BEEN GOOD AS A PLACE TO STAGE THIS EXHIBITION. YEREVAN IS MORE OPEN TO WESTERN INFLUENCES, THANKS TO THE LARGE ARMENIAN COMMUNITY LIVING OUTSIDE THE USSR, BUT THE TBILISI ART COMMUNITY IS THOUGHT TO HAVE BETTER RELATIONS WITH THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES. OUR SOURCES ADD THAT THE TIMING --IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE TWO RUSSIAN SHOWS -- WAS CHOSEN DELIBERATELY IN ORDER TO ALLOW THE GEORGIANS TO APPEAL TO THE PRECEDENT WHICH THEY SET. BY NOT BRINGING THEIR CANVASES WITH THEM IN THE FIRST INSTANCE, THE VISITING CONTINGENT FEELS THAT THEY AND THEIR HOSTS WILL BE ABLE TO STAY OUT OF TROUBLE SHOULD THE GEORGIAN AUTHORITIES DECIDE NOT TO PERMIT THE EXHIBITION.

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